

REMARKS

Interview

Applicant thanks the Examiner for her time and attention in the telephonic interview held on December 22, 2003. New claims 42 and 43 and the following comments are in response to the Examiner's comments and suggested amendments in the interview. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner contact Applicant's representative to conduct a second interview prior to issuing an Office Action.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1, 2, 5-30, 32, 34-38, and 40-43 are pending in this application. No claims have been canceled. Claims 42 and 43 have been added. Support for new claim 42 is found for example in figures 1, 2 and 3; page 1, line 5 and page 10, line 29-32 in the specification. Support for new claim 43 is found at page 6, line 20. No new matter has been added by the above claim amendments. Applicant submits the following arguments in supplement to the Reply filed October 14, 2003, but not entered until December 10, 2003.

Supplemental Arguments on the Rejection under 35 USC 103(a)

The Examiner rejects claims 1, 2, 5-12, 15-30 and 33-36 as obvious over Mehta et al. USP 6,306,590 (Mehta '590). Applicant

traverses the rejection and respectfully requests the withdrawal thereof.

Mehta '590 generally discloses a "multiphasic microfluidic apparatus" where synthesis and separation of the components occur in separate, albeit communicating compartments. The components are typically made or purified in the first phase and separated in the second phase. Mehta '590 has separation micro-channels that are filled with a gel. The micro-channels run both horizontally and vertically in the apparatus. However, the biological or chemical reagents tested in Mehta '590 do not move on the stationary phase in two-dimensions, much less in a three-dimensional manner. Instead, the reagents in Mehta '590 simply follow the path of the micro-channel. Mehta '590 discloses gel electrophoresis, which is conducted in a one dimensional phase.

On the other hand, in the present invention, the compounds may migrate in two-dimensions in or on the TLC plate or in three-dimensions in a 3-D bulk as illustrated in Figures 1, 2 and 3.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons in conjunction with the arguments in the Reply filed on October 14, 2003 hereby incorporated by

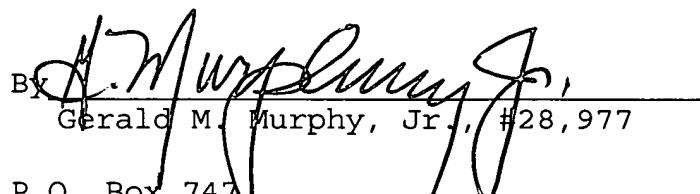
reference, Applicant submits that the present invention is patentable over Mehta '590; thus, the claims should be allowed.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Kecia J. Reynolds (Reg. No. 47,021) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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